

generic formula on day-to-day decisions for all students is nothing short of frightening.

So, Mr. President, I thank you very much for the time, and I hope we can work out these questions in the remaining days. Some of the questions now do not relate to the amount of money being spent on education but is being narrowed down to who is spending it, who controls it. I think the Republicans have made it very clear that if the money is to be spent, it should go to local school districts so that the parents and the teachers and local officials can decide how that money should be spent, not Washington. But on the other side, they would rather have the money come here to Washington so they can disperse it, so they can tell parents, teachers, local school districts and local officials how those dollars should be spent. I think Americans would rather have those local options left to themselves because this is incrementalism at its best. If you let Washington get its foot in the door, the camel's nose under the tent, it is only going to be a matter of time before they want more and more control over education in this country.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

EDUCATION IN THE 105TH CONGRESS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, over the past several days, the White House has bombarded the airwaves with rhetoric suggesting that congressional Republicans have turned a deaf ear to the needs of our nation's students. Hearing all this, I have to say I feel like I have entered a parallel universe. Less than one week ago, I was standing in that same White House listening to the President laud one of the most significant bipartisan achievements of the 105th Congress—enactment of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998.

Lost in all the pre-election maneuvering is any recognition of the solid record of accomplishment by this Congress on behalf of students from preschool through graduate school. I would like to take a few minutes to review that record.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

One of the first measures considered by the 105th Congress was the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997. The development of this legislation involved a level of cooperation which is virtually unprecedented—between Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, and Congress and the Administration. The leadership demonstrated by Senator LOTT was critical to the success of this effort, as was the many hours of work by my colleagues on the Labor and Human Resources Committee—particularly Senators KENNEDY, COATS, HARKIN, FRIST, DODD, and GREGG.

The result of this bipartisan effort is a law which strengthens our assistance

to States for making a free appropriate public education available to children with disabilities. Major principles underlying the reauthorization bill included: placing an emphasis on prevention; basing procedures and paperwork on common sense and accountability for results; developing a coherent policy for dealing with disciplinary actions; and offering local school districts options for fiscal relief.

In addition, we have followed up words with action by providing substantial funding increases for IDEA. I was extremely disappointed that the Administration's fiscal year 1999 budget included no increase for special education funding for children with disabilities from 3 through 21 years of age—not even an adjustment for inflation. Fortunately, due to the prodding of Senator GREGG and others, Congress had increased special education funding by more than 60 percent over the past two years. In fiscal year 1996, we provided about \$2.3 billion for IDEA state grants. That figure was increased to \$3.1 billion in FY 1997 and increased again to \$3.8 billion in FY 1998. We expect to add at least another \$500 million this year.

TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT

Bipartisan cooperation also led to the inclusion of a substantial investment in education as part of the Taxpayer Relief Act signed into law last summer. This act contains 11 types of education tax breaks amounting to \$40 billion over 5 years—the most significant of which is the HOPE Scholarship credit.

EMERGENCY STUDENT LOAN CONSOLIDATION ACT

Late last year, the President signed into law a measure designed to provide relief to borrowers who were unable to consolidate their student loans due to the suspension of the Direct Loan consolidation loan program. On August 26, 1997, the Department of Education suspended its consolidation loan program in an effort to deal with the backlog of 84,000 applications which had piled up prior to that time.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

This summer, Congress completed action on the first major reform of the National Science Foundation in a decade. Approved unanimously by both bodies of the Congress, this legislation responds to our Nation's changing research and technology needs and provides \$11 billion over three years to ensure our continued world leadership in science and technology. As a result of leadership provided by members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, particularly Senators KENNEDY, FRIST, DODD, and COLLINS, these funds will be used to support more than 19,000 competitively awarded projects at over 2,000 colleges, universities, elementary schools, and high schools.

Through this authorization, we provided for the greatest investment in basic math, science, and engineering research in our Nation's history. An often overlooked feature of the measure is the dramatic investment being made to develop and strengthen our Nation's human resources.

The reauthorization bill reflects the critical need for greater investment in systemic education reform, professional development, curriculum reform, as well as informal science education. It provides more than \$1.2 billion over three years to strengthen our nation's capacity to teach math and science to secondary and elementary students. More than \$300 million of these funds will be used to ensure that our Nation's math and science teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to prepare their students. Another \$300 million will be used to support model efforts at systemic education reform. An additional \$800 million will be used to strengthen the quality and availability of math, science and engineering education at our nation's colleges and universities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY

Yet another example of the progress which can be made when partisan differences are set aside is legislation signed into law by the President this August, which supports programs that assist educationally disadvantaged adults in developing basic literacy skills, achieving high school equivalency certification, and learning English. These provisions comprised the education component of comprehensive legislation known as the Workforce Investment Act to which Senators KENNEDY, DEWINE, and WELLSTONE made significant contributions throughout the process.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act provides assistance for those adults most in need of acquiring literacy skills. Of the approximately 4 million adults who annually receive services under this program, 75 percent usually come into the program with below 8th grade literacy skills.

This legislation emphasizes the importance of coordinating adult education programs with employment and training activities and family literacy initiatives. It also establishes a comprehensive accountability system to assess the effectiveness of the activities undertaken by States and local communities. The establishment of accountability measures will enable the federal government to optimize its investment in adult education and family literacy activities. This investment stands at \$385 million today.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

As I mentioned earlier, one of the most significant bipartisan achievements of this Congress is the Higher Education Amendments which were signed into law last week. From the start of this process, in both the House and Senate, the development of this legislation was a joint venture on the part of Republicans and Democrats. In the Senate, I worked closely with Senators KENNEDY, COATS, and DODD each step of the way. In addition, every single member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee—as well as many Members outside the committee—made positive contributions to this measure.

Since its inception in 1965, the Higher Education Act has been focused on enhancing the opportunities of students to pursue postsecondary education. The grant, loan, and work study assistance made available by this Act has made the difference for countless millions in pursuing their dreams for a better life.

In the face of rising college costs, the 1998 amendments have provided students with the lowest cost loans in nearly two decades. With increasing concern about the quality of our nation's teachers, this act will take giant steps in improving teacher preparation. And with students, parents, and—frankly—Senators concerned about the delivery of student aid, this act completely overhauls the federal role by placing it in the hands of a professional and accountable agency within the Department of Education.

I believe the lasting legacy of this reauthorization bill will be its provisions dealing with teachers. At its foundation, it embraces the notion that investing in the preparation of our nation's teachers is a good one. Well prepared teachers play a key role in making it possible for our students to achieve the standards required to assure both their own well being and the ability of our country to compete internationally. In fact, the continued health and strength of our nation depends on our country's ability to improve the education of our young people. Integral to that is the strength and ability of our nation's teaching force. Without a strong, competent, well prepared teaching force, other investments in education will be of little value.

CARL D. PERKINS VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL
EDUCATION ACT

The story does not end here, as several other important education initiatives are "in the pipeline" on the way to the President. Last week, the House and Senate gave final approval to legislation designed to more fully develop the academic, technical, and vocational skills of secondary and postsecondary students enrolled in vocational and technical education programs in order for the United States to be more competitive in the world economy.

This legislation is an important complement to the Workforce Investment Act and benefitted from the same bipartisan teamwork which produced that Act. The Workforce Investment Act streamlined and consolidated a myriad of job training programs and also put into place tough accountability mechanisms. The 1998 Perkins reauthorization emphasizes the important balance between a strong academic background and a vocational and technical education system that reflects today's global economy.

There are presently between 200,000 and 300,000 unfilled positions in the technology field. The reason for the difficulty in filling these positions is not because of low unemployment

numbers, but because of the lack of skilled workers. These positions require an excellent vocational education system and the ability to pursue further technical education following high school.

READING EXCELLENCE ACT

Also in line for signature by the President is the Reading Excellence Act. The purpose of this legislation is to improve both the reading skills of students and the instructional practices for teachers who teach reading, and to expand family literacy programs—including the Even Start program. States and local communities will work together as a partnership in providing professional development activities to teachers and other instructional staff and in carrying out family literacy efforts.

HEAD START

Under the leadership of Senator COATS, and with the assistance of Senators DODD and KENNEDY, we will also enact this Congress a reauthorization of the Head Start program. Recognizing the critical role of the pre-school years in a young child's development, this legislation expands the Early Head Start program for our youngest children in a manner which balances the desire to make this program available to more children and families and the need to ensure that every Head Start program meets the high standards of quality that we have demanded.

The new evaluation and research provisions will provide much-needed information about how the program operates, help identify the "best practices," and will guide the grantees, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Congress to continue the improvements in Head Start which began four years ago.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Finally, the President will soon be presented with the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998. Senators COATS and LIEBERMAN are to be particularly commended for their skill and persistence in forging a bipartisan alliance on behalf of this legislation. The purpose of this legislation is to provide financial assistance for the planning, design, and initial implementation of new charter schools. This assistance will enhance the efforts of states and local communities to increase the number of charter schools and will help meet the President's goal of having 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000.

In terms of education, I believe that the 105th Congress is among the most productive in my memory. The actions we have taken this Congress touch the lives of students of all ages—from youngsters in Head Start and Even Start, to special education students, to high school vocational students, to college undergraduates and graduate students, to adults in need of remedial education.

It is unfortunate that all of this work seems to have been forgotten. It is also unfortunate that no one is acknowledg-

ing that congressional Republicans stand ready to spend as much money on education as we have offsets to support.

Instead, an effort appears to be underway to convince the American public that failing to fund an untested and unauthorized program to reduce class size should be taken as a sign of total neglect of education by this Congress. The facts just don't support that conclusion. The number of teachers is not as important as the quality of teachers. On the Federal level we must focus on promoting and ensuring quality. We don't necessarily need millions of new teachers—what we really need are millions of good teachers.

To hear the President and his advisers, hiring more teachers and reducing classroom size is the silver bullet which will solve the many deficiencies now plaguing our elementary and secondary schools. What we should all know by now is that there are no silver bullets when it comes to assuring the quality of education.

Rather, the only way to achieve the goals we seek is through the constant, day-to-day plugging away on behalf of the highest possible standards in all our education endeavors. I believe that the Congress is doing its part and that we have the legislative record to back that up.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CITIES OF BRISTOL, TENNESSEE AND BRISTOL, VIRGINIA

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 214, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (H. Con. Res. 214) recognizing the contributions of the cities of Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, and their people to the origins and development of Country Music, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 214), with its preamble, was agreed to.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEARS 1998 AND 1999

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 466, S. 1259.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: